

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 0351

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SENV, OTRA, SEL, ECEM, IT, US
SUBJECT: LOMBARDY REGION FEELING PAIN ON COMMONER ALLEGATION.

1. SUMMARY. LOMBARDY REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION CRITICIZED SEVERELY BY VISITING PROF. BARRY COMMONER IN PUBLIC REMARKS HERE FEBRUARY 28, IS DISTURBED AND EMBARRASSED AT COMMONER'S INTERVENTION AND HOPES WE WILL LEND REGION SUPPORT BY ISSUING DENIAL. END SUMMARY.

2. LOMBARDY REGIONAL PRESIDENT CESARE GOLFARI PHONED US LATE MARCH 1 TO SAY THAT PROF. BARRY COMMONERS REPORTED ALLEGATION HERE THAT US AIR FORCE HAD WITHHELD IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM HIM (GOLFARI) ON HIS TRIP TO US LAST SEPTEMBER WERE FALSE AND CONSTITUTED ACUTE EMBARRASSMENT FOR HIM AND FOR REGION. GOLFARI SAID COOPERATION FROM AMERICAN OFFICIALS AND SCIENTISTS ON HIS TRIP HAD BEEN EXCELLENT, VIEWPOINT CONFIRMED BY STATE DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ISSUED AT TIME. NOW COMMONER HAD SHOWN UP WITH PURPORTEDLY NEW AIR FORCE STUDY, WHICH GOLFARI BELIEVED TO BE NONE OTHER THAN ONE USAF HAD ALREADY SENT TO REGION, BUT WHICH COMMONER WAS PORTRAYING AS EVIDENCE (ACCORDING TO IL GIORNALE) THAT AIR FORCE HAD WITHHELD INFORMATION IMPORTANT FOR SEVESO RELIEF EFFORT. (ACCORDING TO REPUBBLICA, COMMONER SAID THAT AIR FORCE
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REFUSED TO GIVEN STUDY TO GOLFARI BUT THAT HE (COMMONER) HAD PRIED IT LOOSE AND SENT IT TO ITALY HIMSELF IN OCTOBER.) COMMONER WAS IN ANY CASE CREATING WIDESPREAD IMPRESSION THAT GOLFARI HAD BEEN DECEIVED AND THAT USG - FAR FROM LENDING HAND TO CLEAR UP SEVESO DAMAGE - HAD DELIBERTELY REFUSED HELP IT COULD HAVE GIVEN.

3. GOLFARI SAID REGION WOULD TREAT COMMONER AFFAIR AT REGULAR PRESS CONFERENCE FRIDAY MARCH 4. HE SAID HE WANTED TO COORDINATE REGION'S PRESENTATION WITH ANYTHING SAID PUBLICLY BY EMBASSY, AND TO THAT END WOULD SEND TO CONSULATE EARLY MARCH 2 MATERIAL COMMONER HAD GIVEN HIM. HE ALSO URGED THAT EMBASSY ISSUE OWN STATEMENT ON MATTER, SUGGESTION WE AGREED TO PASS ON TO EMBASSY FOR ITS CONSIDERATION.

4. SOME FURTHER DETAILS ON COMMONER INVOLVEMENT IN SEVESO CASE WERE GIVEN US BY PROF. SILVIO GARATTINI OF MARIO NEGRI INSTITUTE, WHO WAS ONE OF EXPERTS WHO ACCOMPANIED GOLFARI TO US LAST SEPTEMBER. GARATTINI SAID PURPOSE OF GOLFARI'S TRIP TO US, HAD BEEN TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THERE EXISTED ANTIDOTE TO DIOXIN, AND THAT ONE AVENUE TO BE EXPLORED LAY IN STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED IN PRESS TO COMMONER THAT USAF KNEW OF SUCH ANTIDOTE. AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, HOWEVER, INCLUDING THOSE AT PENTAGON, WERE IGNORANT ON SUBJECT. WHEREUPON GOLFARI GROUP TELEPHONED COMMONER, WHO DECLARED HE HAD BEEN MISQUOTED. IN OCTOBER - GARATTINI WENT ON - REGION RECEIVED FROM USAF A REPORT AF HAD JUST RELEASED, WHICH REGION DISSEMINATED WIDELY HERE (IN SOME 100 COPIES). BUT REPORT CONTAINED NOTHING NEW AS FAR AS LOMBARDY PEOPLE CONCERNED. SUBSEQUENTLY, COMMONER PICKED UP SAME AF REPORT AND SENT REGION HIS OWN ELABORATION OF IT, WITHOUT HOWEVER ADDING ANYTHING NEW. LATER, COMMONER PARTICIPATED IN TELEVISION SATELLITE HOOK-UP ON SEVESO (TG 1 SPECIALE) SHOWN IN ITALY, WHERE HE DECLARED THAT, AS FAR AS DECONTAMINATION WAS CONCERNED, HE COULD SUGGEST NOTHING MORE THAN THAT LAYER OF TOPSOIL BE REMOVED AND INCINERATED. NOW - CONCLUDED GARATTINI - COMMONER HAS SHOWN UP AGAIN FOR SOME REASON AND IS SOWING GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFUSION AS WELL AS INSULTING INTELLIGENCE OF ITALIAN SCIENTISTS. GARATTINI ILLUSTRATED LAST POINT BY SAYING THAT COMMONER HAS PRESENTED CASE OF MISSOURI GIRL WHO WAS CURED OF CHLORACHNE AS THOUGH IT WERE SOMETHING ITALIANS DID NOT KNOW, WHEN IN FACT THERE IS LARGE LITERATURE ON CASE AT MARIO NEGRI OF WHICH ITALIANS PERFECTLY AWARE.

5. GARATTINI SAID MARIO NEGRI WOULD NOT ISSUE PUBLIC STATEMENT REBUTTING COMMONER SINCE INSTITUTE NOT INVOLVED IN DECONTAMINATION, FOCUS OF COMMONER'S CRITICISM. BUT HE HOPED US EMBASSY WOULD DO SO, SINCE IMPRESSION WAS BEING SPREAD THAT AMERICANS HAD NOT HELPED OUT ON SEVESO. TRUTH WAS THAT US HAD COOPERATED WITH ITALIAN OFFICIALS AND SCIENTISTS CLOSELY, PRODUCTIVELY, AND ON CONTINUING BASIS, ACHIEVEMENT FOR WHICH WE SHOULD NOT FOREGO CREDIT.

6. REQUEST EMBASSY PROVIDE ANSWER WE CAN RELAY TO GOLFARI CONCERNING HIS REQUEST FOR PUBLIC EMBASSY STATEMENT ON COMMONER ALLEGATION.FINA

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